



PRIME MINISTER

ODA DISPERSAL

1. I appreciate the problem the Foreign Secretary sets out in his minute to you of 22 February. However, I am certain that we must stick to the figure of 2,000 posts for Glasgow and East Kilbride, which we announced in Parliament last July. You will recall the strong feelings of our colleagues in Scotland about this. The Ministry of Defence dispersal is to take place to Glasgow, but not until the mid-80s. One of the difficulties is that the 650 ODA posts for East Kilbride are to be dispersed in 1981-82. They will therefore be the only evidence of our intentions on dispersal to Scotland during the life-time of this Parliament.
2. You will remember the great difficulties we had about deciding on the HSE dispersing to Bootle; I am sure it will be no easier at this stage to get Departments to go to the West of Scotland.
3. The news that the total of 650 posts is now not firm has already leaked to Scottish Members. I have had a letter from Maurice Miller. At least one of the Civil Service unions knows about this. Therefore the matter must be settled one way or the other quickly.
4. I accept the Foreign Secretary's view that to disperse one or more of the scientific units of ODA would be very costly and would not be achieved within the timetable. But even discounting the specialist units there is a total headquarters staff of 1,400 in ODA.
5. I believe there is no practical way of keeping to our timetable and fulfilling our commitments except to either (a) stick to the original figure of 650 posts from ODA despite all the difficulties or (b) to find further posts from FCO itself to cover the gap.

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

6. Now that FCO and ODA are to be merged, I would have thought that the merged Departments could come to a sensible arrangement as to which groups should be dispersed.

7. I am copying this minute to members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport, Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

P.C.

PAUL CHANNON

25 February 1980





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